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ABSTRACT

This paper draws upon interviews with several eminent behavioral scientists who are well acquainted with the American educational scene in order to: 1) glean the latest, freshest ideas from behavioral science; and, 2) to focus the paper sharply upon alienation as seen in its relationship to the schools. First, the origins of the concept of alienation and its contemporary meaning are examined. Varying perspectives on alienation, and its relationship to the generation gap, are offered by Dr. Keith Davis, Dr. Edward Joseph Shoben, and Dr. Gilbert Wrenn. The major part of the paper is devoted to the challenge for the school and approaches for the social studies teacher. Ways to make schools less rigid and impersonal are suggested. Among several ideas for social studies teachers, Wrenn recommends careful attention to group process and group tolerance of deviant ideas. Davis sees moral development as being the desired focus for much of social studies, and would utilize small discussion groups for probing moral dilemmas. Developing student discussion out of cognitive conflict derived from moral dilemmas finds application in numerous conceptual areas. Finally, content of the social studies curriculum can hardly be perceived as relevant by youth unless it provides for consideration of what Hunt and Metcalf have described as closed areas. (Author/JLB)

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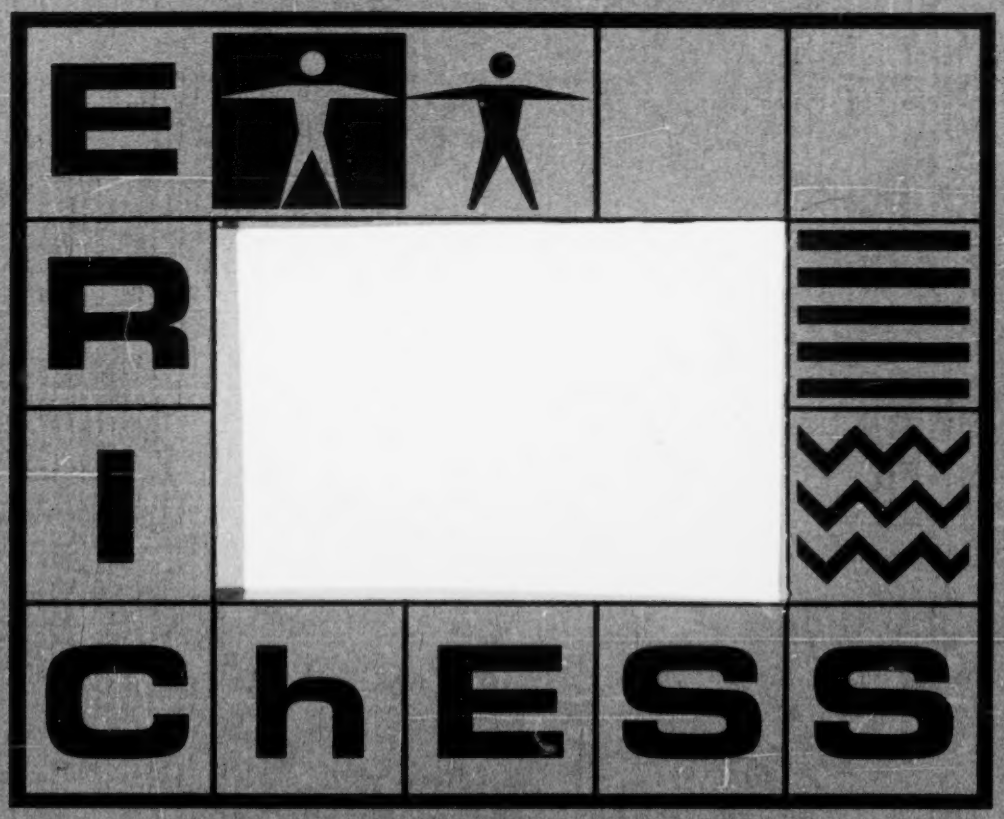

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ADOLESCENT ALIENATION:

SOME IDEAS AND APPROACHES

FOR SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

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Contents

page

Preface i

Introduction ii

The Contemporary Concept 1

The Challenge for the School and Approaches for the Social Studies Teacher 4

Student Discussion of Current and Controversial Topics 9

Postscript 10

Bibliography 11

PREFACE

We welcome this pioneering paper as the first on the topic of alienation in respect to the social science classroom. We invite comment and response from the readership, recognizing that the last word on alienation has not been written. If we have started a fruitful discussion of the topic we will consider our effort a success.

Alienation as a behavioral phenomenon among youth deserves the attention of all educators, but most particularly is a concern for the teachers of social studies. What the young are trying to say to us, and the means by which we communicate to them our desire to help cope with the root causes of alienation may well prove to be the major educational challenge of the decade of the seventies. For their alienation says far more than that we shall always be faced with social change or a few dyspeptic students with lagging interest in school. It says something about the will of the young to survive in a world of nuclear technology and about their interest and capacity for dealing effectively with the heritage of preceding generations.

This paper has drawn upon some unusual source material in order to 1) glean the latest, freshest ideas that could be obtained from behavioral science; and 2) to focus the paper sharply upon alienation as seen in its relationship to the schools. Early in the project, it was decided to seek this input from several eminent behavioral scientists who were well acquainted with the American educational scene.

Dr. Keith Davis, Professor of Psychology at Rutgers University, Dr. Edward Joseph Shoben, Jr., Vice President of Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington, and Dr. Gilbert Wrenn, Professor of Education and Psychology at Arizona State University kindly accepted the invitation to contribute their ideas. Gracious acknowledgment is due to them. However, full responsibility for errors, omissions, and other common shortcomings resides solely with the author.

Although the interview material is not presented by itself, nor in a continuous, verbatim account, it did prove to be a rich source of provocative ideas. Consequently the distinguished behavioral scientists are quoted at length throughout this exposition.

INTRODUCTION

Although the notion of alienation has only recently found its way into popular usage, the concept of alienation is an old one and appeared as a topic of scholarly writing over a century ago. Today we hear the term loosely applied to all manner of behavior as the present generation gropes for some explanation of the Woodstock kids' behavior, whether it is their dress and hair style, or the less superficial matter of their refusal to recognize social values that have been largely unquestioned and often highly valued by the elders.

Before examining in some detail the meaning of alienation as we experience it in today's youth culture, some brief consideration of the origin of the concept should be useful. Karl Marx recognized the existence of alienation in his basic writings. Alienation appeared to Marx to be an inevitable by-product of the process of industrialization as it separated the worker from the fruit of his daily labor:

"The *alienation* of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes an object, assumes an *external* existence, but that it exists independently, *outside himself,* and alien to him, and that it stands opposed to him as an autonomous power. The life which he has given to the object sets itself against him as an alien and hostile force." (Marx 1966, p. 96)

As described by Marx, man's labor had lost its intrinsic value, the product of work became separated from the emotional satisfaction of work, and self-fulfillment for the worker was no longer possible. He referred to the products of the worker's labor as *alien* objects and the estrangement of the worker from the satisfaction of production led to alienation. This idea of a state of *powerlessness* appeared as one factor in Marx's concept of alienation. It has been pointed out in at least one analysis of the Marxist concept of alienation that Marx had used two separate words in his original text to impart more accurately the dual nature of alienation as embracing both estrangement and de-personalization. (Bell 1959, p. 933)

Also in the last century, Emile Durkheim wrote of the concept of *anomie* in a way that shows it to be similar to our current concept of alienation. To Durkheim, anomie resulted from the increasing specialization within the labor force with the resulting separation of production from other aspects of man's use or ownership of material goods. The social isolation of anomie was described as an insufficiency in the health of society, or the disharmonious functioning of all vital parts of the society. (Durkheim 1933, p. 353)

Erich Fromm explained extensively the nature and causes of alienation among men in *The Sane Society:*

"The insane person is the *absolutely alienated* person: he has completely lost himself as the center of his own experience; he has lost the sense of self." (Fromm 1955, p. 124)

Fromm also developed the notion of self-estrangement in his description of alienation:

"By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which a person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts--but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship." (Fromm 1955, p. 120)

For Fromm, the marketplace orientation of society has robbed man of the necessary opportunities to direct his own destiny. Buffeted about by currents over which he has no control, man begins to perceive his environment as foreign and hostile. He feels alone, powerless, and often hopeless.

THE CONTEMPORARY CONCEPT

In an effort to develop a better understanding of alienation, we ought to avoid the easy application of a label by those who are puzzled or frightened by what they see today in adolescent behavior. The concept of alienation as we are using it is not intended to imply individual psychological pathology, nor is it a euphemism to apply to the widespread use of hard drugs, nor do we wish to substitute it for already identified neuroses or general deviant behavior. Rather, it is a concept which may help us to better understand some of the behaviors, either collective or individual, which teachers, counselors, and parents may increasingly encounter among young people today. We recognize that there is not a universally accepted set of behaviors which all would wish to identify as alienation. Some may prefer the more sympathetic and accepting flavor to be found in Charles Reich's description of the "new generation--Consciousness III," for our knowledge about youth behavior ought to be accompanied by some corresponding increase in our compassion for the young. (Reich 1970)

How then are present day scholars defining the concept of alienation? Walter Gerson utilizes a concept which emphasizes the loss of identity:

"A key ingredient in the definition of alienation is the idea that man has lost his identity or 'self-hood' . . .The alienated person is not only out of touch with other persons but also out of touch with himself." (Gerson 1965, pp. 144-145)

This acknowledgement of alienation from self reappears in the ideas of Professor Wrenn and others. A more traditional use of the term is found in Jan Hadja's definitions:

"Alienation is an individual's feeling of uneasiness of discomfort which reflects his exclusion or self-exclusion from social and cultural participation. It is an expression of non-belonging or non-sharing, an uneasy awareness or perception of unwelcome contrast with others." (Hadja 1961, p. 758)

Is this duality in meaning of alienation well recognized by behavioral science? The question was asked Professor Wrenn in the following form--"Who are the alienated?" Wrenn's response:

"As for *who* are the alienated, I think I would take Keniston's concept of them--he talks about two major types: those who are alienated from self, and those who are alienated from society."[1]
Those alienated from self are those who conform and get *into* society in a way that leaves them feeling sold-out, completely alone, and isolated from themselves. Those alienated from society are those who are withdrawn and contemplative, who feel as outsiders, who have little contact with society. It's these two groups with whom teachers should be most familiar, groups which appear to be at opposite ends of the poles as far as their behavior is concerned . . . the excessively conforming ones may be in worse condition psychologically than the active ones who are expressing some of their emotion in their activism." (Wrenn 1971)

Professor Shoben offered the following succinct definition of the term *alienation:*

"Alienation actually represents an affectively toned withdrawal from, or removal from some of the dominant processes of a given culture."

The emphasis on process emerges as Professor Shoben expands:

"For me the utility of the concept of alienation lies essentially in the process that is alluded to. First, it includes the tendency for certain characteristics of the culture to engender opposition from those who, under ordinary circumstances, or under the ideal circumstances of a stable society, would be drawn into full membership in that culture. At the moment, the degree of alienation, thinking of it now as a process which affects people in different amounts, seems to me to be very large.

There are those who are alienated to the point of active, open, destructive opposition to certain aspects of American culture. As an example of this, witness the violence of some who are very negatively disposed to American foreign policy as symbolized by the war in Southeast Asia. Then there are those who have been very actively put off by a new awareness of the long standing injustice toward certain minorities. Then there are some various degrees of alienation that may be expressed in hair styles or clothing patterns . . .Another area where it seems to me the processes of alienation may be operating is the process of dropping out of school. Dropping out of all institutions, including academic ones, is essentially an act of protest and a reflection of alienation from the same characteristics of American life as those characteristics are embodied in the schools." (Shoben 1971)

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[1] An excellent explication of this view is given by Kenneth Keniston in "Youth: A 'New' Stage of Life," *American Scholar,* August 1970, 39: 631-654. The reader may also wish to examine Keniston's earlier works on alienation including *The Uncommitted: Alienated Youth in American Society,* Dell Publishing Co., N.Y., N.Y. 1965; also "Alienation and the Decline of Utopia," *American Scholar,* Spring 1960, 29: 161-100.

Professor Keith Davis offered a somewhat different definition of alienation. Sharing some of the elements of the explanations of Shoben and Wrenn, Davis placed more emphasis on the inability of alienated youth to appreciate what society has to offer them. He explains it well in the following:

"Alienation is a failure to appreciate what society and the way of life has to offer; it is a failure to appreciate that you have meaningful and viable options; a failure to recognize that you have things available to you which are worth doing. The alienated person fails to appreciate the rationale, the meaningfulness of our existing social practices and institutions. Now as to what causes alienation, there are at least two possibilities. First is the possibility that alienation follows from a fundamental contradiction within the way of life, i.e., it is a fault of society, so to speak--the society is sick, not the individual. It is like expecting the individual to learn how to participate fully in a society that is itself contradictory and inconsistent, so he is facing a hopeless task. It is no surprise then that he is alienated.

The other possibility is one that looks for the cause of the problem in the person's biologically given capacities, in his family and personal history. Perhaps he has had special kinds of family circumstances that have disabled him in a sense, and have prevented him from participating and appreciating. These disabilities are correlated with social class, they are correlated with the absence of the kinds of experiences that would help a person to appreciate why there is such a thing as society, and the reason for the structures in society." (Davis 1971)

The complexities of the interactions between the changing, tension-producing elements of society and the psychological potentialities of the individual are present in Davis' description of alienation, and other scholars have developed certain aspects of these interactions. [1]

The societal causes of alienation are generally recognized to be many and interrelated, and several stand out as worthy of our attention. Shoben's discussion of these is clear and thoughtful:

"The extent to which we have a youth culture which modally is alienated in some degree from the dominant adult culture is largely a function of two factors which may be looked at quite apart from the characteristics of American society at the moment. First is the universality of television and the ease with which it makes information available, or perhaps most of all, the way in which it tends to evoke very strong emotion to the pictorial presentation at the time information is presented. Secondly, the technology of travel and its easy access under conditions of economic cheapness. Young people travel not only in the geographic sense to all parts of the U.S. and foreign countries, but they also travel with respect to its subcultures. They have wandered in unprecedented numbers away from their own special cultural enclaves into the subcultures of others--the migrant workers, the Black and Chicano communities, the Indian reservations, and the rural villages of the South." (Shoben 1971)

Isn't alienation an aspect of a "generation gap," or a form of generational conflict? Wrenn--speaking to the question of generation gap:

"We have always had a generation gap, and you will find people today who will sneer at the idea of generation gap, but I do not. It is a much bigger gap today than ever before. The gap between young people and their eiders exists along several dimensions. First, there is a great deal of affluence among three-fourths of our youths, and the other one-fourth are in poverty, and the poverty gap is something which their elders aren't doing much about. Then there is the large degree of social freedom which young people now have; there has never been this much freedom before, but young people have it now. This is why there is more sex experimentation and experimentation with violence. Urbanization contributes to this gap. A generation or two ago there were more extended families with aunts and uncles or cousins living in the same homes as young people. Today there is just the nuclear family, and the others may be 1000 miles away. Then today's youth have social concerns which previous generations did not have, and they see the problems of the world in which they live much more realistically than did the older generation. High school students are today far more sophisticated than any previous generation in the history of our country." (Wrenn 1971) [2]

All major institutions of the society, including the school, can be viewed as contributing to alienation. The role of the school in the process of alienation was discussed by Shoben:

"Alienation represents an affectively toned withdrawal from the same characteristics of American life as those characteristics are embodied in the schools. Middle-class kids have tended to find more commonality and sympathy for the disenfranchised and the poor than has the school. Kids have generated more admiration for

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[1] The reader may well wish at this point to study the recent explanation given by Kenneth Keniston in "Youth: A 'New' Stage of Life," *American Scholar*, August 1970, 39: 631-654.

[2] Professor Wrenn's excellent analysis of generation differences is also well discussed by sociologist Philip E. Slater in "Cultures in Collision," *Psychology Today*, July 1970, pp. 31-32, 66-68.

those individuals whose basic skills are different from the symbolic ones which schools give credit to--for example, the person who is concerned with art, or someone whose interests are entirely interpersonal, or one whose skills are affective and emotional. The process of alienation is set in motion by the discrepancy between the experience of these young people as they look at what is happening to their agemates, and the restricted range of opportunity which school opens for them." (Shoben 1971)

The temptation to quote another provocative scholar at this point cannot be .esisted:

"One of the reasons that the widely publicized generation gap persists is that the responsible adults in the community talk to each other about the students instead of talking with the students about their common world." (Glasser 1969, p. 222)

THE CHALLENGE FOR THE SCHOOL AND APPROACHES FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER

Critics of American educational enterprise in recent years have been legion, and volumes have been written on the failings of our schools. Social critic Paul Goodman put it quite simply when he said:

"In advanced countries, a chief cause--perhaps the chief cause--of alienation of the young has been the school systems themselves." (Goodman 1970 pp. 25-6, 32-4, 100)

It is unnecessary to produce a further inventory of the faults of education, so we recognize a challenge and consider positive changes which can be made by teachers, particularly those in the area of social studies.

What are some of the practical things that schools can do in an effort to deal effectively with alienated youth? Shoben suggests the following:

"From the standpoint of school organization, one thing which schools could profitably attempt would be to form within themselves relatively small bases--platoons of people in which individuals would get to know other individuals and each of those individuals would act as a kind of mediator for the other in dealing with the institution. An attractive arrangement might be to have 4 or 5 instructors who would deal with 100 to 150 young people for most of the day. Groups of that size are somehow embraceable. Every member of that group can get to know someone with a name and a face; he can know every other member. And the ratio of teachers, say 5 to 150, is not much greater than that found on a regular class basis. There would be enough calm during which those adults could be relating themselves to that group and for them to get to know one another as people and to deal with one another as people . . . Then the organizational unit becomes one of the resources. One can begin to examine the ways in which he relates to others, the ways in which one can begin to make the friendships and form the coalitions by which he can cope more effectively and contribute more constructively."[1]

Shoben continued:

"A second advantage to this kind of arrangement is that more explicit attention is given to the educational process itself, to the realities of contemporary organizational life. In this situation, there is some articulate concern for how a youngster can deal with a school as a kind of prototype for his dealing later with a corporation, a municipality, or any other of the large organizational units around which American society functions." (Shoben 1971)

The need for schools to "loosen-up," to reduce the number of anxiety-producing situations, to find ways in which teachers can learn to come across to students as warm, helpful human beings stands out in almost all of our contacts with students who have dropped-out or given up on school. Extensive interview data with many of Denver's Street Academy students indicate they hold an almost uniform perception of public secondary schools. They see them as rigid, impersonal, conforming institutions manned by teachers who are hypocritical and school administrators who do not care. Whether or not the school actually *is* this way is less important than the fact that large numbers of alienated students have perceived it to be such.[2]

The need for freedom to explore is expressed by one Street Academy student in the following way:

"Another thing that p---- me off about school is the amount of things that I would like to try and not be able to do with perfection, but would just like to try. And I always get shot down. Like, I don't know, every time I want to get into something--I like music very, very much. I think that's one of my favorite little things . . . .I want to continue trumpet and drums, and start piano and guitar, and she (teacher) told me there wasn't a way in the world I could do it and I should just take one at a time. But I don't want to do it that way. And nobody will work with me to do it 'cause they all say it can't be done." (Fegley 1971)

The large centralized schools with their expensive libraries, their magnificent lab equipment, their bureaucracy and impersonal atmospheres, their emphasis on conformity and schedule have apparently "turned off" kids in unprecedented numbers in the past several years. There is increasing evidence that the gulf has never been wider between student's expectations of meaningful education and what they perceive is being offered to them. To too many of today's students who are going through the germinal stages of alienation, the modern, "well-run" school is perceived as something akin to a pressure cooker in which people talk hypocritically about such abstractions as democracy, social injustice, and man's inhumanity to man. The fact that many of these students leave the public school only to continue their education in the fast-developing free schools, street schools, store-front schools, or other non-traditional schools speaks eloquently to the point of their desire to learn.

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[1] One instance of this approach with which the writer is familiar is being launched in the Fall of 1971 at Baseline Junior High School, Boulder, Colorado.

[2] Interview data obtained during 1970-1971 academic year through assistance from Mrs. Judy Warren Fegley, Department of Sociology, University of Colorado.

Among numerous suggestions for social studies teachers advanced by Wrenn, careful attention to group process and group tolerance of deviant ideas is emphasized.

"Providing adequate reinforcement for positive behaviors when these occur with alienated youngsters is important . . . I think sometimes teachers can do this best within small groups. Teachers should organize group discussions about what is going on as seen by students, or what is bothering them. For example, take loneliness as a topic which often concerns young people. Loneliness is very common: everyone has lonely periods, and it is nothing to be disturbed about. But this should be talked about within a small group as it allows the student to be reassured that he is not alone and that it is all right to feel loneliness once in awhile. We should also recognize that the whole business of helping students to help each other is a very important thing for teachers to do. Much of this is done in the small group discussion in which they both talk about themselves, and also talk about how they can help others. Teachers can help the alienated youth, particularly in the social studies classes, to listen to all points of view, to encourage all points of view, and not to be upset with the person whose view is different. It is possible then that an opposite point of view from that of the teacher may be accepted by the majority of the class, and this is okay. Certainly you must never put a person down by saying that his view is out-of-line with what everyone else is saying. That's the best way I know to make him feel like an outsider rather than a person. Recognize that it's allright to be different, to think differently than others." (Wrenn 1971)

In offering suggestions for social studies teachers who are attempting to help alienated youth, Davis takes a different tack. He sees moral development as being the desired focus for much of social studies, and would utilize small discussion groups for probing moral dilemmas:

"What happens in the moral rap sessions is that students discuss moral problems, and the teacher's role is not to give the correct answer, but to listen to the discussion and pick out, in terms of developmental theory, those answers which reflect the highest level of moral development and draw attention to them. If a student answers, 'Well, I wouldn't want someone to mislead me and take my money, and so I don't think it is right to deceive people in order to take their money' then the teacher would suggest the reciprocity principle--which you might call the Golden Rule principle--and might ask 'Is that a principle which has general applicability?' "

Obviously the teacher's role in this illustration is to help the students find general principles by which to assess their behavior and the behavior of others. Davis continued:

"What we find in these groups is that students tend to move through moral developmental stages, first coming out with inadequate moral statements such as, perhaps, advocacy of the use of power and violence as a solution to a dilemma. Then someone else in the group will say that this should not be the case, that there are times when we don't go on the basis of who is strongest, or has the most money, or so on. In the course of this discussion there emerges a reconstruction of the lasting and viable moral principles as developed by Western civilizations. Students then begin to appreciate them with a sense of *feel*--they feel the relevance of these ideas. That is an example of what I mean by creating opportunities for people to come to appreciate what we have in our society. To appreciate the fact that society contains within itself the principles which allow one to criticize inadequacies that we presently see. This encourages the student to see that society already contains the principles and the seed of change and criticism, and that it is not a matter of rejecting something and tearing it down, but a matter of emphasizing the good ideas that have been there all along." (Davis, 1971)

This specific approach, of discussing moral principles in the classroom, is one way to involve students with one another and with their society. Of course, this approach also presupposes that moral development is a valid concern for social studies classes.

Based upon a six-stage approach to man's moral development, as described by Hohlberg and Kramer, some of the desired learning outcomes of social studies instruction could take the form of fostering developmental change within the learner, helping the learner change from his present level to a higher level as defined below.

DEFINITION OF MORAL STAGES
(Kohlberg and Kramer 1969, pp. 100-101)

I. Preconventional level.

At this level the child is responsive to cultural rules and labels of good and bad, right or wrong, but interprets these labels in terms of either the physical or the hedonistic consequences of action (punishment, reward, exchange of favors) or in terms of the physical power of those who enunciate the rules and labels. The level is divided into the following two stages:

Stage 1: The punishment and obedience orientation. The physical consequences of action determine its goodness or badness regardless of the human meaning or value of these consequences. Avoidance of punishment and unquestioning deference to power are valued in their own right, not in terms of respect for an underlying moral order supported by punishment and authority (the latter being Stage 4).

Stage 2: The instrumental relativist orientation. Right action consists of that which instrumentally satisfies one's own needs and occasionally the needs of others. Human relations are viewed in terms like those of the market place. Elements of fairness, of reciprocity and equal sharing are present, but they are always interpreted in a physical pragmatic way. Reciprocity is a matter of 'you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours,' not of loyalty, gratitude or justice.

II. Conventional level.

At this level, maintaining the expectations of the individual's family, group, or nation is perceived as valuable in its own right, regardless of immediate and obvious consequences. The attitude is not only one of conformity to personal expectations and social order, but of loyalty to it, of actively maintaining, supporting, and justifying the order and of identifying with the persons or group involved in it. At this level, there are the following two stages:

Stage 3: The interpersonal concordance or 'good boy--nice girl' orientation. Good behavior is that which pleases or helps others and is approved by them. There is much conformity to stereotypical images of what is majority or 'natural' behavior. Behavior is frequently judged by intention--'he means well' becomes important for the first time. One earns approval by being 'nice.'

Stage 4: The 'law and order' orientation. There is orientation toward authority, fixed rules, and the maintenance of the social order. Right behavior consists of doing one's duty, showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order for its own sake.

III. Post-Conventional, Autonomous, or Principled Level.

At this level, there is a clear effort to define moral values and principles which have validity and application apart from the authority of the groups or persons holding these principles and apart from the individual's own identification with these groups. This level again has two stages:

Stage 5: The social-contract legalistic orientation generally with utilitarian overtones. Right action tends to be defined in terms of general individual rights and in terms of standards which have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society. There is a clear awareness of the relativism of personal values and opinions and a corresponding emphasis upon procedural rules for reaching consensus. Aside from what is constitutionally and democratically agreed upon, the right is a matter of personal 'values' and 'opinion.' The result is an emphasis upon the 'legal point of view,' but with an emphasis upon the possibility of changing law in terms of rational considerations of social utility, (rather than freezing it in terms of Stage 4 'law and order'). Outside the legal realm, free agreement, and contract is the binding element of obligation. This is the 'official' morality of the American government and Constitution.

Stage 6: The universal ethical principle orientation. Right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency. These principles are abstract and ethical (the Golden Rule, the categorical imperative) they are not concrete moral rules like the Ten Commandments. At heart, these are universal principles of justice, of the reciprocity and equality of the human rights and of respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that movement to higher stages of moral development occurs when there is an increased awareness of principles of human rights and a concomitant increase in the levels of abstraction with which these rights are comprehended. Levels 5 and 6 obviously entail thinking which might be described as more adult, more mature, or more responsible than the development expressed at levels 3 or 4.

Kohlberg and Lockwood have reported in detail the use of standardized moral dilemmas as the basis for discussion of values and ethics in social studies teaching. Consider their example following:

"In Europe, a woman was near death from a very bad disease, a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to make. He paid $200 for the radium and charged $2000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about $1000 which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, 'No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it.' So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. Should the husband have done that? Why?" (Kohlberg and Lockwood 1970, p. 17)

Social studies teachers can bring current issues into a similar format for use as a springboard for small-group discussion. For example, one might cast into this format a description of the dilemma which exists when New York City's sewage treatment plant workers walk off the job in an effort to force the city government to effective collective bargaining. Consideration of the benefits of unionization and the strike as an effective weapon in bargaining, as well as the need for a decent wage for workers can be considered against the need to preserve health for the millions in the city, the potential harm to come from dumping untreated sewage into the Harlem River.

The free discussion of all dimensions of the moral dilemma with careful examination given to human rights, the goodness of life, and such human values as freedom enables the students to raise the level of moral development to the extent that their discussion examines the highest order of values. Kohlberg and Lockwood describe this process:

"Assuming that moral development passes through a natural sequence of stages, our approach has defined the aim of moral education as the stimulation of the next step of development. Experiments . . .demonstrate that movement to the next step of development rests not only on exposure to the next level of thought, but to experiences of conflict in the application of the child's current level of thought to problematic situations." (Kohlberg and Lockwood 1970, p. 18)

Thus as effort is made by Kohlberg and Lockwood to approach the teaching situation in a manner calculated to create some sense of moral conflict and uncertainty about real-life dilemmas, and to arrange for some presentation by the teacher or another student of a higher level of moral development, at a stage just above the student's present level.

The goal of raising the student's level of moral development is attained, and--perhaps even more important for the alienated student--at the same time the student learns about his society and the possibilities within it. Further, by dealing with real social problems in discussions at school, the student is less likely to see school as something detached from the world and alien to his own experience.

This type of teaching of social studies is based on the atypical view that moral development is a major goal of learning. Davis defends this:

"I see ethics and morality, and the issue of what a 'way of life' is and should be as primary issues, the kind of thing which can't be avoided in social studies if we are to take such studies seriously. This is transmitting the cultural heritage." (Davis 1971)

Developing student discussion out of cognitive conflict derived from moral dilemmas finds application in numerous conceptual areas. Oliver and Shaver have suggested student discussion of such concepts as "property rights, free speech, freedom of religion, freedom of personal association and privacy, rejection of violence and faith in reason as a method of dealing with conflict, the general welfare of all, equal opportunity, equal protection under the law, rule of law or constitutional limits on government, rule by consent of the governed, due process of law, separation of powers, and local control of local problems." (Oliver and Shaver 1966, p. 15)

That moral dilemmas which contain the seeds of controversy abound on all sides and are encountered by most of us on an almost daily basis, can scarcely be denied. Our inability or unwillingness to come to grips with these issues has been without question one of the contemporary sources for potential alienation within the ranks of youth. There will probably be very little progress toward rational understanding and the development of mature morality among these youth until they have the opportunity for discussion of such matters within the framework of human values. The student should have full opportunity to examine the relative worth or goodness of one value juxtaposed against another value, e.g., are there any circumstances that justify stealing from another person? The student should examine in small discussion groups the bases of law

and social practice--examine these in the light of justice and humane concern for the rights of all persons. He must have the opportunity to discuss and learn what is good, what is just, what is responsible, and what is morally right.

Kohlberg and Lockwood described the contrast between this approach and the traditional social studies instruction:

"The new approach focuses upon forms of thinking, upon methods of organizing and relating facts. Traditional education focuses upon value content, indoctrination of specific beliefs and values. The new education focuses upon reflective modes of valuing and decision-making. Associated with the shift from content to form is the emphasis upon the student as active thinker rather than passive learner. As attention shifts to active thinking and deciding the old disciplinary divisions of curricula disappear. Political thought involves both facts and values, both social science and philosophy. Rational political thought and choice does not come from bins called history, economics, civics, law, psychology, political philosophy, etc. Active political thought jumps from ancient to modern history, from American to European experience." (Kohlberg and Lockwood 1970, p. 6)

Does this type of approach to social studies teaching make the mark? Do students actually move from one level of moral development to a higher level as evidenced by their thinking? Davis obviously believes that it does, and that it is the only approach which is likely to come to grips with the causes of alienation.

"Within the Kohlberg frame of reference there lies the most successful way of doing this. I think that nothing short of this will deal with genuine alienation--alienation is fundamentally a failure to appreciate the whole workings of a way of life, a failure to appreciate what is worthwhile about it, and how it makes possible a decent and humane life for people. We do not address ourself to the problem of alienation when we leave out questions such as 'What kind of life is worth living?' and 'How does society make it possible to live it?' I think that the large questions–the classical ethical questions–can be put in very common sense terms and dealt with in practical ways. The answers to our everyday dilemmas, the moral dilemmas, the everyday practical and political dilemmas, are the curricular content that will make the difference." (Davis 1971)

Kohlberg describes the results of his approach in the following way:

"As experimentally elaborated, we have used these procedures in guided peer discussions of standardized descriptions of moral dilemmas with junior high school and high school students. The essential rationale was to expose the children to cognitive conflict, to the awareness of different points of view, and to expose the children to judgments one stage above their own; by encouraging children at adjacent stages to argue and discuss until some change of the lower-stage children took place.

"By such Socratic direction of classroom discussions of moral dilemmas, (experimenters have) been able to raise a majority of students in junior high and high school classes one stage. The gain of the classroom group is maintained one year later, compared to control groups." (Kohlberg and Lockwood 1970)[1]

[1] Details of the experimental evidence are referred to in M. M. Blatt and L. Kohlberg's "The Effects of Classroom Moral Discussion upon Children's Level of Moral Development," 1969, unpublished research paper.

STUDENT DISCUSSION OF CURRENT AND CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

Content of the social studies curriculum can hardly be perceived as relevant by youth today unless it provides for some consideration of what Hunt and Metcalf have described as "closed areas." These include race relations, patriotism, economics and poverty, sex and marriage, power and the law, and morality in government:

"Failure to examine these beliefs in a social studies classroom has certain effects upon the learning and motivation of students. Students do not learn in any significant and relevant sense the subject matter of history, economics, sociology, anthropology, political science, and geography. These are the very subjects teachers of social studies are hired to teach; but since the knowledge in each of these subject fields conflicts at many points with beliefs that predominate in the closed areas, teachers who take their teaching seriously are placed in a quandary. Many search desperately for items of information that have no bearing upon what students regularly believe, and proceed to teach these rather than basic concepts that would awaken or disturb latent conflicts of students. But concepts such as cultural lag, ethnocentrism, deficit financing, gross national product, judicial review, to mention only a few, the meaning of which throws light upon the common sense of students, are either omitted entirely from the curriculum, or given the kind of treatment that leaves their relevance to society and its problems unclear." (Hunt and Metcalf 1968, pp. 26-7)

Perhaps the most meaningful list of closed areas would be those which students themselves see as having greatest impact on their lives, or those which concern them most.

Such closed areas ought to be opened up by students and teachers for thoughtful examination of any and all factors which might bear upon man's social behavior and social institutions. The very causes of alienation should be discussed openly and opportunities for social action by students ought to be explored within the classroom. Teachers can guide discussion toward such matters as more accurate identification of social problems, the causes of social problems, the deficiencies in community consciousness, and the ways in which man's institutions can be made more humane and more responsive to his needs and desires. What risks should teachers and students be willing to take to bring about improvement of the quality of life for all? Certainly no serious discussion of social responsibility and risk-taking can be undertaken without acknowledging the possibility of personal commitments by teacher or student or any other conscientious citizen. Students are more likely to fault their teachers and parents for a lack of guts rather than a lack of knowledge, or--to put it in a more proper phrase--they may examine issues with more concern for our adult society's "do-nothingness" than its "know-nothingness."

A closed area in which Davis would encourage student discussion is the often controversial subject of student rights.

"A lot of handbooks on student rights are now being developed. Student rights is a hot issue. I think that we ought to seize this opportunity to bring this practical matter into civics teaching in a social studies curriculum. Use this question, 'What procedures do we have which effectively implement student rights?' We should also deal with the rationale for the restriction of full political rights until certain ages. Is there a sound rationale for restriction of full political and judicial rights from 16 or 17 year old students? There may be. There may be excellent reasons for giving a principal or a school board certain authority which we wouldn't give to anyone else when we are dealing with those under 21." (Davis 1971)

Glasser, writing in his *Schools Without Failure* makes the case in this way:

"We never learn that we must become involved with students in discussing relevant subjects when they are young, when they trust us and look up to us. Our failure to do so is a major cause of the mistrust so prevalent today. For example, *the intellectual topics important to adults reading this book (such as the war, politics, religion, abortion, love, sex, pills, family planning, zoning, lobbying, taxes, and the draft) are never discussed in depth and with meaning in any school.* If I am wrong, I am willing to stand corrected, but I know that few, if any, teachers or students can effectively refute this statement." (Glasser 1969, p. 217)

POSTSCRIPT

We would remind teachers that alienation is very much an individual phenomenon, that it results from a complex of influences and feelings within each individual. Some cases may be so severe that they result in depression quite unreachable by the teacher. He or she may have to refer the student to counselling or psychiatric services outside the school classroom or even outside the school. Further, we caution the teacher against confusing individual alienation in any of its forms with the adoption of a "counter culture." The symptoms may seem the same, but the youngster who has really adopted the "youth culture" may feel very much "together" and quite different from the youngster who feels lost or helpless or outside himself.

Teachers with children from over-demanding families may find an alienation which grows primarily from a sense of failure. To an outsider the sense of failure seems almost incomprehensible since the student has already mastered many skills and talents. But parents, previous teachers, coaches, and even older siblings may have pushed the youngster in a way which destroyed his will. No matter how well he has done, there was always something he could have done better. Having tried and tried and found that "they" could never be satisfied the child develops a deep distrust in himself and stops trying. He drops out.

The teacher, if he can reach such a youngster at all, needs to provide success experiences, tasks whose accomplishment can be recognized as unqualified success. This particular type of alienation has been described thoroughly by John Holt in *How Children Fail* and *How Children Learn.*

For those teachers dealing with racial minorities, the problems are more severe than most of us can know. Powerlessness over one's future is the prevailing fact of life in the ghetto, the migrant labor camp, and the reservation. Nothing less than profound changes in the social system can change those facts of life (and the alienation which results from them). We suspect that nothing less than an action-oriented social studies classroom can begin to counteract the powerlessness, meaninglessness, and cultural estrangement so many of these students feel.

We commend to all teachers the ideas Dr. Sander has presented in the knowledge that for many an adolescent a sincere, patient, genuinely interested teacher may be the only adult to whom he can relate.

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